new masses

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The SECRET of POLAND'S PROGRESS

A first-hand report by John Stuart

Woman Against Myth

by Betty Millard

Three Kinds of Fiction

by Charles Humboldt

Eight Bottles of Beer

A Short Story
by Phillip Bonosky

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"for America's sake.."

ENCLOSED find $30, $10 of which is the last installment on a previous pledge. The remaining $20 is my donation for the current drive. I consider it an honor to be called upon to contribute my bit toward maintaining one of the most consistently progressive voices in the struggle against reaction in America today.

J. P.

Paterson, N. J.

I'm terribly sorry that I can't send at least five times this amount ($2). I have not worked for six months because of illness.

L. B.

Claremont, Cal.

Enclosed contribution of $10 in response to your appeal. I do not use your printed form as that lessens the value of the copy and all of mine are passed on to some one else to enjoy and profit by.

ANITA WHITNEY.

San Francisco, Cal.

Here is $10. Am hoping to raise more at a New Year's party. Good luck!

BLANCHE F. A.

Newark, N. J.

We're two University of California students—sorry our contribution ($2) is so meager, but honestly, fellows, it's "strictly from hunger."

A. S. AND D. H.

Los Angeles, Cal.

Here's just a little check ($3) with the great hope that it provides an additional breath in your struggle to live!
Cleveland, O.

R. F.

We think NM is swell and are getting our friends each to send in something, however small. Sorry our own contrib ($5) has to be so small at this time.

H. AND P.

Larchmont, N. Y.

Wish I could give more for America's sake. I hope you make your goal.

J. W.

Austin, Tex.

THEY keep pouring in—letters like the above, letters that make every one of us on NM proud to be associated with this magazine. But there aren't enough of these contributions. We said we needed $10,000 by Christmas and $15,000 by January 15 to keep NEW MASSES alive and fighting. But as we go to press a few days before the holiday, the total received is only $5,866.

Frankly, the outlook is desperate. A small number of people have made sacrifices, but the majority of our readers have not yet responded. Again we say: it is $15,000 by January 15, or else . . .

Remember that deadline and do something about it *today*.

THE EDITORS.

new masses

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The Secret of POLAND'S PROGRESS

By JOHN STUART

Warsaw.

FOREIGNERS have said of Warsaw that it was absurd to rebuild a city that no longer existed. It would be better to build a new capital elsewhere. But I know now how harsh this must have sounded to the Poles who heard it. On the day after Warsaw's liberation, when mines were still exploding and with almost all the city razed to the ground, the roads leading to the capital were jammed: nothing could stop people from returning. Thus Warsaw began to live once more.

And despite all the ruin Warsaw is not a sad city, nor a discouraged one. The sound that sings through the streets is that of hammering and construction. I have seen buildings spring up where a week before there was nothing. How it is done I do not know, for there is hardly any machinery to speed things: it is literally by hand that Warsaw is being resurrected. Out of the rubble new bricks are made and old bricks are being collected by school children, who are given a zloty for every usable brick they turn in.

It will be years before Warsaw recovers. It will live again not by restoring a past buried in the ruins. I have talked with architects and the personnel responsible for the city's rebirth; they are bold men. They lack materials and equipment but there is no lack of imagination or daring. Out of the wreckage a whole social system is being revamped and these men take their initiative from the zest for change which is the essential characteristic of this land. The change from private to public ownership (although there is considerable private building) has relieved the planners of the pressures of landlords or privileged interests. They can soar the heavens of town planning and create a city that accurately reflects the needs of Warsaw as a focal point of culture, of government, and of the country's modern democracy. I have been in Lodz, the textile center, and I have seen what ugliness there can be in a Polish city whose life was ruled by factory owners who refuse to live in Lodz themselves.

To free many people from a slave mentality engendered by decades of corrupt, oppressive rule either under czar or Pilsudskyite or German will take longer than the very short time during which the democratic government has been in power. But the dominant note in Polish life is that Poland is rediscovering itself as a nation. It is sloughing off the sense of inferiority—and what a cleanser the experience of war was in that respect—which pervaded worker and peasant because their labor was appropriated by those who posed as their superiors. The concept of nation is broadening for the dispossessed have, at terrible cost, become the possessors. This is the source of Poland's great strength today, the soil in which the people's Poland finds its roots and sustenance. The Polish worker is not only liberating himself but in the process liberating the entire community.

I ARRIVED in Poland at the tail-end of a trade-union campaign to drive out speculators and keep prices down. Bands of inspectors roamed the villages and cities checking prices to see whether they conformed with those set. And in this drive the unions, with a membership of almost 2,500,000, had the close cooperation of the government.

Last spring profiteering and speculative plundering brought huge sums into the hands of those who practiced this economic sabotage. In the countryside corn was hoarded in order to inflate its price. The speculation accompanied a lowering in actual wages—for which there was no reason, in view of the amazing increases in production. The balance has now in large part been redressed and wages have steadily increased, although they are still very low and far from sufficient to meet the necessities of life.

I have heard grumbling about this and I would indeed consider it strange if I did not. Many prices are staggeringly high and wages provide only the barest minimums. The average miner earns from eight to twelve thousand zlotys a month; a government worker eight to ten thousand; a railway or textile worker six to eight thousand. Journalists are the new earning aristocrats. Their monthly income ranges anywhere from twenty-two to forty thousand zlotys. And of course they dress better, smoke more and eat better. But their group is naturally small compared to the large mass of workers. Fifteen thousand zlotys a month is necessary to support a family with two children.

There is no point in converting the value of the zloty into dollars. There is hardly an "official" rate at which the zloty can be quoted. At a government bank you can get one hundred zlotys to the dollar and in the black market about six hundred and fifty. These conversions of zloty into dollar dramatize nothing because the Polish

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worker has no dollars and if he is in industry and a member of a union, as he is invariably, he gets food coupons and ration cards which make it possible to keep body and soul together—not in comfort but certainly without suffering. On the free market a kilo of meat (a little more than two pounds) would cost from 250 to 300 zlotys, but with ration cards the price is only 33 zlotys; sugar on the free market is priced at 180 zlotys a kilo and 15 zlotys with the ration card; free market flour is 120 and rationed flour 20. Outside Wroclaw (formerly Breslau) in the huge canteen of the government rolling-stock works, I got a fine lunch consisting of meat, potatoes and beets for three zlotys. In offices where I have gone for interviews I have also been served lunch at a cost of sixty zlotys—approximately the same lunch for which I have paid 200 zlotys at my hotel.

The rationed area covers not only essential foods—the whole purpose of rationing is not to restrict consumption but to assure supplies for basic workers—but also cloth, and all of it can be supplemented with the extra ration cards which the worker gets for members of his family. The ration system declines as wages increase and prices are lowered. I have been told that rationing is on its way out—a mark of growing economic stability and the end of one of the inevitable emergency measures brought by an economic plant largely ruined.

It would be fantasy to believe that everyday life in Poland begins to approach the ease that can come only after more years have passed and the country's political problems remain only the normal and natural ones of growth. Life in Poland, however, is one of increasing percentages. There is enormous pride in the fact that in October 1947 the coal industry, the heart of Poland's economic recovery, exceeded the target set for it in the national plan by almost 200,000 tons—a remarkable achievement considering its handicap of outworn and insufficient machinery. In the middle of 1947 the general index of industrial production surpassed the prewar level of 1938. Thus in less than two years great strides have been made. The metal industry doubled its production over 1938, and there have been increases in chemicals and power of 38 and 59 percent respectively. As of June several industries had yet to approach prewar output—notably smelting, paper, textile and electrical equipment—but they were then so close to prewar production that by now they have either equalled it or gone beyond.

Sure Cure

YOU may have heard about President Truman's Council of Economic Advisers. High-powered brains, their job is to figure out how to keep capitalism, the American Way of Life, from running into another depression—which is the American Way of Life, too. But the chances are that you don't know what they're telling the President unless you are one of the businessmen to whom the *Kiplinger Washington Letter* is circulated privately.

According to a recent issue of this publication (which does not permit quotation) the advisers have got a big idea for 1948 on how to cure the causes of inflation instead of merely treating the symptoms by price control. The plan has the simplicity of all truly great ideas.

It is this: *a planned depression next year.* Not a real big depression, just a little one. Not 17,000,000 unemployed as in 1932, just about 4,000,000 this time. That's the plan.

The results, Mr. Truman and big business are assured, will be excellent. First, it will knock the stuffings out of labor's demand for a third round of wage increases—increases which would cut in on business profits. Second, there would be a little less demand for goods—not enough to lower prices but just enough to keep them from going too much higher. Third, the workers would be better behaved; the less productive could be fired and the hard workers would work harder—more production and less cost.

That is their plan for 1948. What's yours?

THE EDITORS.

Leather production has scarcely made progress because of the enormous destruction of cattle.

NOTHING but the zeal of the Polish workers can explain the flourishing of production. I have heard Prime Minister Jozef Cyrankiewicz describe this pulsing economic life in a recent session of the Sejm (parliament). This bald-headed, thirty-six-year-old government leader, who spent years in Oswiecim, stood before the deputies and with glowing pride described the picture of economic progress in the first nine months of 1947. The interpreter who sat by my side caught Cyrankiewicz's enthusiasm, and he gesticulated and stressed his words as though he himself were delivering the parliamentary message. I was impressed with Cyrankiewicz's simple narrative and his conviction that Poland's problems could be solved without dependence on foreign aid.

I heard the same thing in essence in a talk I had with the vice-minister of industry and trade, Colonel Eugene Szyr. Long ago he served in the International Brigade in Spain. He is an impressive man—quick, facile and to the point. Sitting behind a beautifully-carved desk he looked very tired, and it seemed to me that he was behind in sleep by about ten years. What struck me in our conversation was his confidence that Poland did not have to beg its way back to a "reconstruction" that would in the end leave it in a beggarly state, that the country would take nonsense from no one. Szyr told me that Poland's big problem was to increase its investments in order to expand industry. Trade from abroad would help enormously, but it must be trade on the basis of equality and integrity. The country has had too much experience recently in ordering vital equipment and then finding that it did not arrive as promised. This interferes with planning and dislocates urgent projects, he said, and strongly hinted that hostile politics had dictated many of the delays.

I left feeling that Szyr, like others with whom I had spent time in different ministries, was absolutely sure of where the country was going and that attempts at intervention from abroad would be rejected out of hand. It was not a bravado that hides anxiety. These men have nothing to

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I BELIEVE THERE IS A SANTA CLAUS - I'VE SEEN HIM - THERE'S NOT ONE, BUT HUNDREDS, THOUSANDS, MILLIONS OF SANTAS. IN FACT EVERYBODY IS A SANTA CLAUS THIS TIME OF THE YEAR. THEREFORE IN THIS SANTA CLAUS I HAVE FAITH.

Dear Santa:-
Please bring us
Peace on Earth
and
Good Will
toward Men.

Yours
Bill GROPPER.

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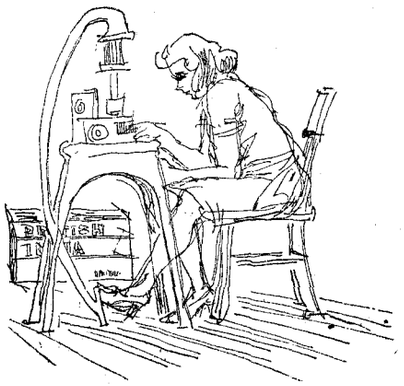
fear from their people, who in the vast majority are united behind them. After you have lived through the hell of Hitlerism nothing very much can really frighten or panic you. Poland's leaders are constantly startled or surprised by jolts from abroad, particularly Britain and the United States. But they cannot be diverted from the goals that have been set.

The virtue and the strength of the new democracy is that it is not deceived into thinking that a boatload of foreign bathtubs which produce no wealth at all are more important than a mine drill or the hand that directs it. The bathtubs and the gadgets will come but only after the economic foundations which secure political sovereignty are laid.

I HAVE been to several Polish homes —of workers, government officials, writers, farmers. My friend Zofia works as a secretary and her husband is on the editorial staff of a weekly. They have one room and their baby son is away with relatives in the country. There simply is not enough space for a child in the cubicle in which they live. Zofia was in a concentration camp for four years and her husband for three. She has not spoken of it except when I have prodded her to tell me of her life. Zofia is a political person in the sense that she reads the newspapers, and has a great sensitivity for people's needs. She is generous and terribly stubborn in insisting that her guests share what little she has. I asked Zofia about bathtubs and whether she



Irene Goldberg.

was not eager for the comforts of life.

"Yes, yes, of course," she replied in German learned from concentration camp guards. It is a language she hates to speak. "I crave them badly and I know others who crave them even more. I miss perfume and my stockings are not pretty. I have seen women go into tears when they have seen nylons they could not have. I want better clothes for my boy and my husband needs a new suit. But all these things are terribly expensive and we cannot save much to get them although our rent amounts to practically nothing. So we do without. But I have great satisfaction in the fact that my family is together again." I know what she meant for I have met hardly anyone in Poland who did not have a father or wife or child torn from him and murdered.

"Zofia," I asked, "what about the others, those who are frequently referred to as 'backward elements'?"

"These people," she said, "are backward only in that they have not caught up with others who understand why nylons are not as important as machines. And you must know something about the frightful lives they have been forced to live for years on end. Women without men, children without parents — always the uncertainty whether you would be alive tomorrow. Do you know what this does to people? You lie, you cheat— you sometimes lose self-respect in order to live. You see a lot of drinking in Poland. Blame that on the war. Now in peace there is another 'war' to change things. Not everyone understands what is happening. I do not mean those who understand very well our new policies and are deliberately sabotaging them. I mean people who think of prewar Poland as a paradise. They have to work harder now and in retrospect the old peacetime seems so much sweeter. They forget the unemployment. They forget the people who lived on the backs of others. And we are very tired. When you come home from work there are often four or five other people in a small room. And so many of our people are sick, and so many young people have tuberculosis.

"You must know that it is not hard to be a 'backward element.' It is harder to see beyond the nose. The great wonder and at which I marvel always is that we have so much energy left. So many millions of us are heart and soul with what the government is doing—a government that asks us to work harder and harder but as yet cannot give us bathtubs and nylon stockings and moving picture palaces in return."

"What does it give you?" I interjected.

"It has given us back a sense of being people. You cannot know how necessary that is after having had to jump at every command given by the 'superior race.' The government gives us more and more material things every day. Too bad you did not come earlier. Had you been here three years ago you would understand what we have gained and how everything possible has been done to help our terribly wounded people. We are people now, and we are Poles."

In another article, which will appear next week, Mr. Stuart tells of his trip to the new Western Territories of Poland.

portside patter

By BILL RICHARDS

The funds voted to aid the Navajo tribe have been cut in half. Congress is turning us into a nation of Indian-givers.

•

A survey reveals that fifty-two percent of the American farmers never heard of the Marshall Plan. This should provide the Administration with food for thought.

•

Congress is investigating speculation in wheat trading. The public thinks that a lot of market deals have gone against the grain.

•

General MacArthur is expected to return to the US in time for the Republican convention. In his absence the government of Japan will probably be left in the hands of his trusted lieutenant, Hirohito.

•

Princess Elizabeth's allowance has been raised to $200,000 a year. She got the husband and the British people will have to keep him.

•

Pope Pius XII will soon start a broadcast on world affairs. A larger audience is now assured for any papal bull.

•

A GOP official says that Taft should have the "complete support" of the American people. After all, hasn't he been holding up the American people for years?

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WOMAN AGAINST MYTH

Do women "like to be dominated"? The economic and cultural background of some common assumptions.

By BETTY MILLARD

"How did woman first become subject to man, as she now is all over the world? By her nature, her sex, just as the Negro is and always will be to the end of time, inferior to the white race and, therefore, doomed to subjection; but she is happier than she would be in any other condition, just because it is the law of nature. . . ."

When James Gordon Bennett made these observations in 1852 it was indeed true that woman was subject to man all over the world. In America it had been held to be self-evident that all men were created equal, but only a few female crackpots and a couple of male fellow-travellers made the ridiculous contention that men and women were created equal. It was self-evident to the Philadelphia *Public Ledger and Daily Transcript* in 1848 that "women have enough influence over human affairs without being politicians. . . . A woman is nobody. A wife is everything. A pretty girl is equal to ten thousand men, and a mother is, next to God, all-powerful. The ladies of Philadelphia are resolved to maintain their rights as Wives, Belles, Virgins, and Mothers, and not as Women." To the *Transcript's* women readers it must have come as a surprise that they had rights in their sexual and family relations with men, for they were being offered at the same time advice similar to that still being given to their daughters by the Reverend Knox-Little of Philadelphia in 1880. To her husband a wife "owes the duty of unqualified obedience," he said. "There is no crime which a man can commit which justifies his wife leaving him or applying for that monstrous thing, divorce. It is her duty to subject herself to him always. . . . If he be a bad or wicked man, she may gently remonstrate with him, but refuse him never." (Eugene A. Hecker, *A Short History of Women's Rights.*)

But if the Philadelphia ladies were surprised to learn in this roundabout fashion that they had rights, there were still greater surprises in store for them. For 1848 was the year of the first Woman's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, N. Y., when a woman got up in public and for the first time openly demanded the vote for women. The events that followed were enlivened by great drama, participated in by towering figures, full of meanings for us today. Yet we have all but forgotten this struggle and the people who led it. Who in 1947 remembers Elizabeth Cady Stanton or Lucretia Mott? How many students of the history of oppressed peoples remember the mountains of abuse heaped on these women for disputing the "law of nature" which declared woman to be man's property? In short, why does the history of woman's battle for equality no longer seem to have meaning for many of us?

The only conclusion one can come to is that most of us feel the fight is more or less won. We do not leave the history of the Negro people to the historians—even the good ones—because we know that all of us who want to achieve equality for the Negro people need this weapon. If we felt the same way about the women's struggle, we would make use not only of the challenging life of Frederick Douglass but of that of Susan B. Anthony as well.

But is it true that the fight is practically won? Should we perhaps turn our attention to other more pressing matters? In general women have the vote; they can hold property, make contracts and run businesses (with exceptions); divorce is no longer a calamity and they can usually get custody of their children. Few of these rights were theirs a hundred years ago. Furthermore, women are not lynched—as women. Women are not murdered by the millions in death camps—as women. They have met these violent ends only as Negroes, Jews or anti-fascists.* The old legal rule that permitted a husband to beat his wife "within reason," with a stick no thicker than a man's thumb, has been superseded. In most countries wife-beating is no longer good form.

For women there is generally reserved a quieter, more veiled kind of lynching. Many of the thirty-eight million American housewives are doomed to circumscribed, petty lives, to the stultification of whatever abilities and interests, outside of motherhood, they may have had. The 15,400,000 women wage-earners are discriminated against in almost every field of employment, are notoriously paid less than men for the same work, are the first to be laid off. Yet according to a survey conducted by the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor, 84 percent of working women work because they have to in order to support themselves and their dependents. The Bureau of Census estimates that there are now from two and a half to three million unem-

* It might be interesting, however, to consider the question of rape as a form of violence practiced against women. Rape can only happen to a woman, just as anti-Negro attacks can only be made on Negroes and anti-Semitic attacks on Jews. It seems to me the first is a reflection in brutal form of the underlying values of our society just as are the other two. True, rape, unlike attacks on Negroes and Jews and other minorities, is not deliberately employed as a means to terrorize and keep in subjection an oppressed group. But it is a criminal act of a special kind—*an anti-woman act*—just as the other two are crimes of a special kind. The lynching of a Georgia Negro is the violent expression of a pattern of white supremacy; rape is a violent expression of a pattern of male supremacy, an outgrowth of age-old economic, political and cultural exploitation of women by men. When a Negro woman is raped by a white man these two aspects of our society merge. But it's only then that we tend to think of it as a crime against an oppressed group.

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ployed; of these, according to the Congress of American Women, over two million are women.

Legally, many of the discriminations of old British common law against women are still on our statute books and enforced by the states. In eight states the husband controls all the property of the marriage without regard for the contributions of the wife. Women are excluded from jury duty in sixteen states; in six states a married woman is no more allowed to keep her week's wages than was the slave Frederick Douglass, who when he worked in a Baltimore shipyard also had to turn his pay over to his master every Saturday night. Politically, twenty-seven years after the nineteenth amendment was ratified there are still only seven women in Congress. The Republicans and Democrats make no serious attempt to nominate women in accordance with their potentialities, and even in progressive circles there is a tendency to give only lip-service to "the need to bring women forward into full citizenship."

It would require a volume to describe all the economic, legal and political barriers against women. I do not want to multiply examples here because, while this aspect of the woman question is crucial, these articles will deal primarily with some of the less discussed aspects of the question. For instance: how does a woman in such a society feel about herself as a woman? She is a majority of the electorate; does the fact that she hasn't yet achieved equality mean that she doesn't really want it after all? Is it true or is it a myth that "women like to be dominated"?

IT IS hardly remarkable that the great majority of women are from earliest childhood convinced—if only subconsciously—of their inferiority to men. Woman's inferiority is embedded in the very language she uses. Take Webster's definition of the word "man" (and the definition occupies twenty lines in the Collegiate Dictionary, third edition, as against five for the word "woman"). Man is: "(1) A human being. (2) The human race; mankind. (3) The male human being." Only in the third is man specifically a male. In the first man is synonymous with "person," in the second with "people." Where does that leave woman? Webster's says woman is: "(1) An adult female person. (2) Womankind." The word is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *Wifmann*, or wife-man. Hence a woman is the wife of a man, a sort of appendage of the human race, or "mankind." In other words, the word "woman" historically occupies the same position in our language as woman has occupied in society.

Further, "he" means "one." ("If anyone wants a copy of this pamphlet, will he see me after the meeting?") It's "men and women," not the other way around. All men are created equal, and they hope to establish Liberty, Equality and Brotherhood. "Sisterhood" not only doesn't include men (assuming that the brotherhood men hope to establish does include women), but it's a fairly comic word in itself. As for the language we use when we get emotional, the choicest insults in the English (and probably every other) language reflect either on the animal kingdom or on women, especially the insultee's mother. A whole psychological study could be written on the fact that among men a four-letter word relating to sex has become one of the most common expressions of anger and aggression, reflecting as it does a society in which the sexual relationship itself often has exploitive characteristics.

Lesson in Journalism

TODAY, boys and girls, our class—or rather our group (there are, of course, no classes in our country) will consider the function of the editorial page. Unlike the reporter gathering facts at first-hand who often gets a distorted view because of his closeness to the scene, the editorial writer is in a good position to see things in perspective. Aloof from the turmoil of rushing events, he can sift and weigh the facts which have been gathered and reveal the true significance of the news. We will now turn to an example of the difference between the short-view distortion and the long-view truth.

I have here in my hand a copy of the New York *Herald Tribune* dated December 17. This paper, as you have been told often enough to know for yourselves, is one of the Models of American Journalism. On page 19 there is a report from Joseph Newman, their Moscow correspondent. He writes:

"The Soviet Union went off regular rationing today for the first time in six years, and opened all its state shops for free purchases by the public. It thereby became the only important country on the European continent to abandon rationing.

"Everyone here seemed proud of this achievement. The public was pleased because it could now buy loaves of white bread, cuts of beef and bars of chocolate without coupons and in sufficient quantities to satisfy the largest appetite. . . ."

Further on the correspondent reported that "Soviet citizens can look forward to getting much more for their rubles than in the past. It has been estimated that the purchasing power of Russian laborers will be at least 100 percent greater."

You will readily see that this is the short-view distortion of what we call in our new, revised, expurgated and approved course in Economics IV the "Growing Economic Crisis in Russia."

We now turn to the editorial page in this issue, where we can take the long view and see things in true perspective. In its leading editorial the *Tribune* points out that "the revelation that Russia, too, is suffering under the same inflationary strains that are afflicting everyone else must diminish confidence in her ability to make good whatever promises are offered under the 'Molotov plan.'"

And now, following our new procedure which dispenses with questions and discussion, the lesson is adjourned. Before you leave I want to announce that next term there will be a slight tuition increase of twenty percent. *Happy New Year to you all!*

L. L. B.

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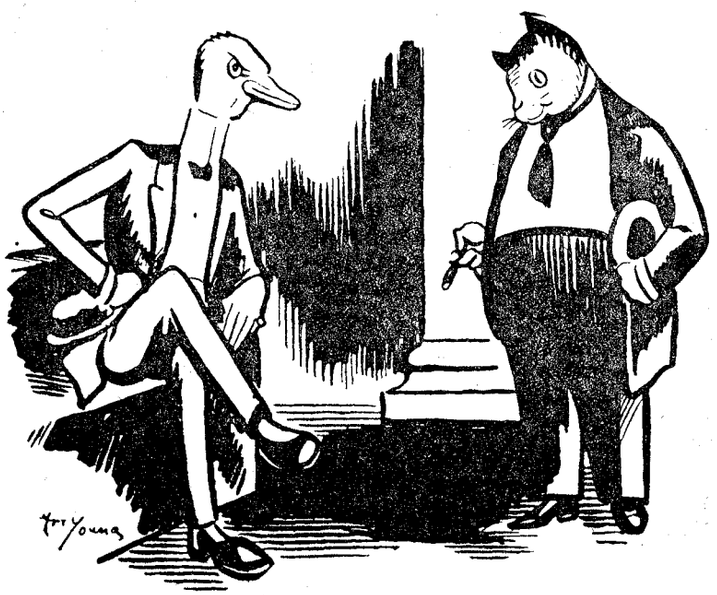

"Women are such geese!"
"Yes—and so catty!"

Reproduced from the MASSES of March, 1916. December 29 marks four years since the death of Art Young, legendary pioneer of American cartoon art, who poured his hatred of reaction and cant, his love of people, his faith in socialism into countless inimitable pen-and-ink drawings. He was one of the founders of NM and his work appeared in our pages for thirty-three years.

Language changes as society changes —though of course it may lag behind a century or two. What's going to become of the verb "to man," for instance, now that Soviet and Yugoslavian ships are being womanned as well as manned? If the trend continues—and it's sure to—it will pose us a semantic problem.

Philologists of 2147 are going to be interested in how we solve such problems. We can see that in the present state of our society it would be all but impossible to eliminate from our language reflections of woman's inequality: and even if it were possible it would, by itself, be futile, for our job is to attack the inequality and the chauvinistic concepts themselves. Then the language will take care of itself.

SO MANY factors operate to impress upon women a sense of inferiority that it would be impossible to touch upon all of them.

All major religions, for instance, hold woman to be a sort of necessary evil. When God created the world, he made man in his own (male) image, and then created woman as a sort of afterthought from one of man's inconsequential spare parts. Everyone knows that when Eve disobeyed God and bit into the Apple of Knowledge she became responsible for all the ills that have befallen the world, or Man, ever since. (Pandora in opening that box played a similar dirty trick on the ancient Greeks.) The Bible says: "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." (I Tim. 2:12). Confucius says: "It is a law of nature that women should be kept under the control of men and not allowed any will of their own." In the Jewish religion the men pray: "I thank thee Lord that thou hast not created me a woman." The Hindu woman who burnt herself on the funeral pyre of her husband did so because of her religion. A Turkish woman is held in the harem through religion. In the place of worship orthodox Jewish women are fenced off by a grating; Christian women cover their heads—a relic of the Eastern veil, the symbol of subjection. Women cannot become priests or rabbis. As for the Christian marriage ceremony, only recently has the word "obey" been generally omitted; we still follow the custom of "giving the bride away," which originated at a time when a daughter was a form of property to be given away as the father would dispose of any other form of property; and the twelfth-century Church authority Gratian says, "Women are veiled during the marriage ceremony that they may know they are lowly and in subjection to their husbands." (In fact, he adds that woman must never, under pain of excommunication, cut off her hair, because "God has given it to her as a veil and as a sign of her subjection." He offered no explanation of the fact that men can grow long hair not only from the tops of their heads but from the front of their faces as well, thus beating any shroud God ever gave to a woman.)

Laws, customs, language, religion—they all conspire to keep woman in her place. But by themselves they couldn't do the job. Day-to-day attacks in books, films, radio shows and magazine articles are called for, since women are more and more coming awake, discovering that their problems are tied up with the great over-all struggle for democracy.

In 1853 the editor of *Harpers' New Monthly Magazine* warned of the "intimate connection [of the women's rights movement] with all the radical and infidel movements of the day. A strange affinity seems to bind them all together. . . . This female Socialism presents a peculiar enormity of its own: in some respects more boldly infidel than any kindred measure. . . ."

This commentator put his finger on a remarkable heritage of common struggle. A century ago women's fight against oppression was closely linked with that of labor and, especially, the Negro people. The leaders of the women's movement took part in the struggle against Negro slavery; the Abolitionists gave their support to the women. The two movements have been considered dangerous and upsetting to the social structure for much the same reasons.

It boils down to this: Negroes can be paid less; women can be paid less. As long as both are not organized on an equal basis with white men and work under equal conditions, they form the most vulnerable sections of labor; they are labor's Achilles' heel. In a general period of assault on labor they especially must be attacked relentlessly.

SO THAT in this year of Taft and Hartley it is no accident that there is a crescendo of abuse levelled against women. Gone are the wartime editorials saluting women in industry, the magazine articles praising her newfound mechanical abilities. Today we read about the "foolishness" of women,

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their "immaturity." Above all, we get a barrage of the familiar propaganda that woman's place is in the Kuche with the Kinder. Paradoxical as it may seem, this is essential to a supply of underpaid women for industry: a favorite employer argument is that women leave their jobs when they get married or have children and therefore they are not as valuable as men, and should be paid less. Hence it is necessary to preserve and reinforce the general opinion that a woman's job is transitory and unimportant and that her only real fulfillment comes as a wife and mother. ("A woman is nobody. A wife is everything.")

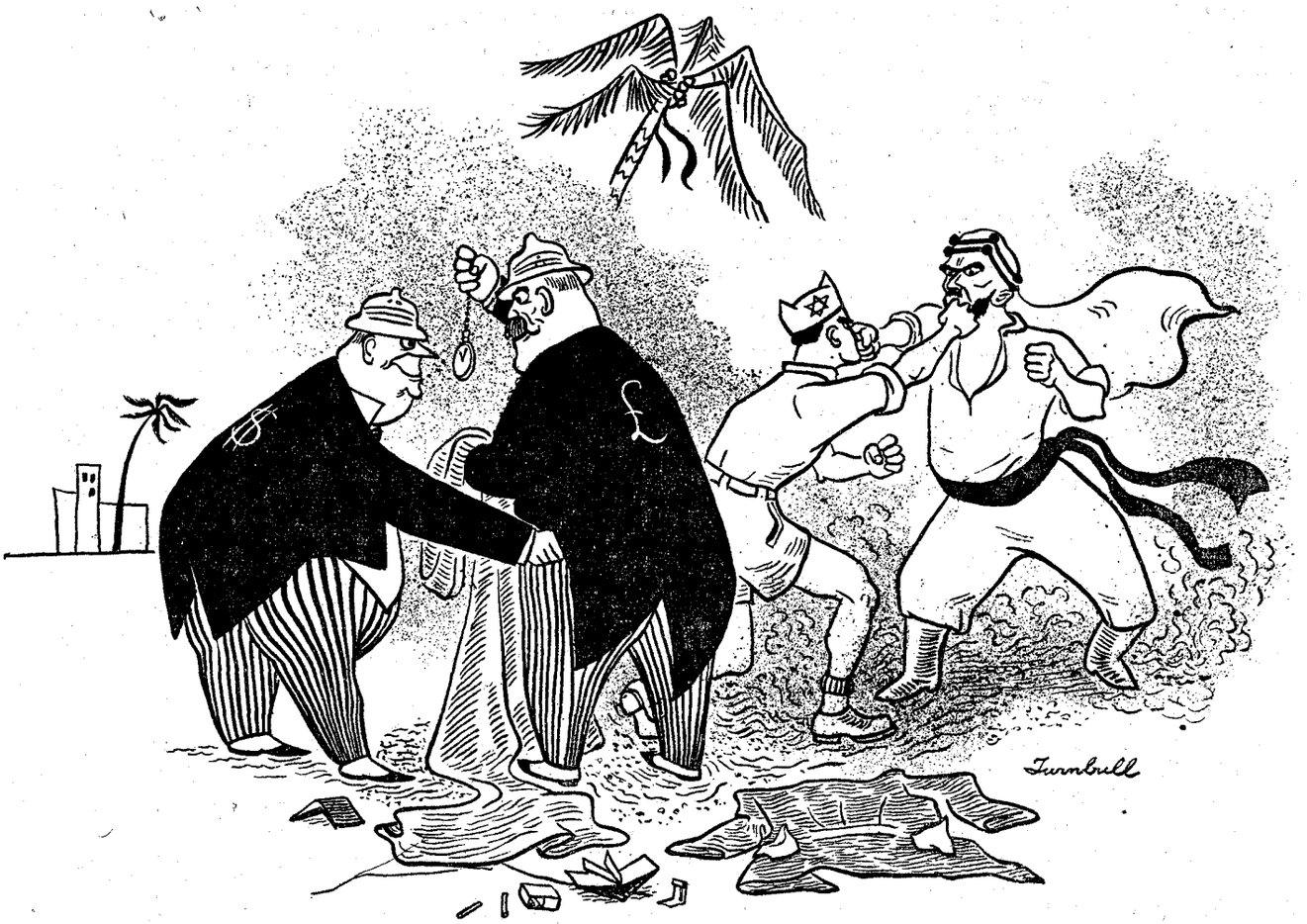
The difference is that the authority quoted is no longer God but Freud. In 1947 women are attacked by Ferdinand Lundberg and Dr. Marynia Farnham in their best-seller, *Modern Woman—The Lost Sex*, not for attempting to subvert God's will but for unconsciously seeking to deprive the male of his power, to castrate him. They reach into history to perform a psychoanalytical autopsy upon that great pioneer Mary Wollstonecraft, whose *Vindication of the Rights of Women* appeared in 1792. "Mary," they say, unconsciously "probably wished to . . . kill her father, but this desire, though powerful, was powerfully deflected as untenable. It came out only in her round scolding of all men. The feminists have ever since symbolically slain their fathers by verbally consigning all men to perdition as monsters." Similarly, Elizabeth Cady Stanton is said to have agitated for votes for women because of her envy of the male sex organ.

This kind of use of Freudian concepts has become a political technique which is increasingly effective among people who are no longer susceptible to religious argument, for it seems to deal "scientifically" with real problems. Women *do* envy men. But they have good cultural reasons for doing so. The majority of women who try to combine running a home and a full-time job find great difficulty in doing either satisfactorily. Economics, religion, customs, taboos impose conflicting roles and wishes on women, who are unable to function fully in society as both mothers and citizens not because of their special biological natures but because every society until the advent of socialism has made it economically and socially impossible for them to do so.

There are few women who do not look forward to marriage and children. And certainly raising a family of happy, useful citizens is an accomplishment of which any woman can be proud. But it is not in any way belittling a mother's hard work and achievement to assert that time may prove that motherhood no more exhausts a woman's potentialities as a human being than fatherhood does a man's. To him fatherhood is part of a normal, happy life: he does not become a "house-husband."

The day will come, I believe, when it will no longer be necessary for any woman to refer to herself as merely a "housewife." And when that day comes there will open out before women such a future of accomplishment and satisfaction as we can only dream of today.

(This is the first part of a two-part article. The second will appear next week.)



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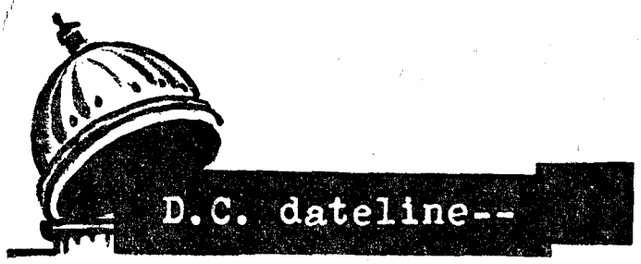

On a Note of Hysteria

Washington.

THIS column will be in the nature of an inquest upon the Special Session of the Eightieth Congress, now deceased. The session ended as it began—on a high note of anti-Communist hysteria. It began with the introduction by the President of what he called his "interim European aid plan." It ended with presentation of his message asking that $17,000,000,000 be authorized by the Congress for expenditure in Europe between April 1, 1948, and June 1, 1952.

However, his request for $17,000,000,000 is only the first installment in the Marshall Plan. There will be other Marshall Plans for those areas of the world in which the rising consciousness of the people threatens the imperial rule of American capital. More millions will be sought to compound the disaster in Greece, the "pilot plant" where what is now called the Marshall Plan was given its trial. Billions will be considered for aid to the oppressors and murderers of the Chinese people—Chiang Kai-shek and that section of the Kuomintang whose destinies are bound up with his.

Indeed, golden props for the tottering rule of Chiang may become one of the first points of business for the regular session of Congress, which opens January 6. One of the factors which gives this prediction validity is the realization in Congress that Chiang is losing the civil war he has fought against the Chinese people since 1927. Indeed, it is openly said that the Chiang forces cannot last beyond March unless American dollars are forthcoming in huge quantities.

Chinese reaction's new Congressional allies revealed themselves at the hearing hastily summoned after the House struck from the interim subsidies bill the $60,000,000 that Senators had seen fit to include. An open hearing on Chiang's need for aid was hastily announced by the Senate Appropriations Committee, whose chairman is Styles Bridges (R., N. H.). (Senator Bridges used to be plain Harry S. Bridges in the Congressional Directory until the ILWU's Harry Bridges emerged as a leader of longshore labor. Then the Senator became "H. Styles" Bridges. Later he even dropped the aitch.) To this hearing came all the advocates who believe in aid to Chiang up to and including large-scale military intervention, if necessary.

Bridges, whose mouth in repose has a slight, fleering twist to it, picked his witnesses with the shrewdness for which he is noted in the Senate. There were none in opposition to aid for Chiang, although Bridges tried to force the State Department's Willard Thorpe into this position. First of all, there was the crimson-pated William C. Bullitt, emissary of Henry Luce (*Times-Fortune-Life*). Then tall, silver-haired Maj. Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer, author of the top-secret report to Truman on the situation in China.

And there was Rep. Walter H. Judd (R., Minn.), former medical missionary who said that he was a prisoner of the Chinese Communists for "eight months in 1930." Thin, wiry, intense, Judd was the most virulent of all the witnesses. But even he unwittingly revealed that four years after the Japanese attack on China, Chiang Kai-shek was still more interested in fighting the Communists than in accepting their offer of unity to repel the invaders. "In 1942," Judd said, "Chiang summed up the situation this way: We have two enemies, internal and external. We'll let the British and Americans fight the Japanese while we carry on the war against the Communists was the method Chiang wanted to follow."

This statement was made in reference to the $500-000,000 appropriation Congress gave Chiang in 1942. This loan is seldom mentioned, since most of it disappeared into the pockets and bank-accounts of Chiang's prime henchmen. (Secretary Marshall has explained State Department failure to produce a program for Chiang by explaining that he was seeking some method that "would have at least a seventy percent efficiency" in expenditure of the funds allocated.) In the tumbling words of a fanatic, Judd explained that he said expenditure of American funds in China was not intended primarily to aid the Chinese people, but "to keep Russia busy on two fronts."

THIS reiterated theme, on which every change possible was played throughout the session, served its purpose well, at least as far as the Congress was concerned. But nevertheless this brassy fanfare was broken through from time to time by the deep rumble of national discontent caused by high prices, by the rising storm of inflation. In consonance with the Congressional apathy that greeted Truman's requests for economic controls, the President was not too insistent on his ten-point program.

So, because he failed to make a national issue of high prices and swollen profits, the Republicans were able to push through their own "anti-inflation" measure in the form of a joint resolution by both Houses. Its principal provision ratifies existing nullification of the anti-trust laws by providing for "voluntary" agreements between "persons engaged in industry, business and agriculture," under guarantees of immunity from prosecution under the Sherman Act. However, since the GOP's leaders are shrewd tacticians, the responsibility for "encouraging" such extension of monopoly control over prices is left to the President. If signed by the President, the resolution will also extend transportation and export controls, provide a food and feed conservation program, enable the President to recommend rationing for commodities in short supply, subject to Congressional approval, and inaugurate a program to "stimulate and increase the production of foods, agricultural commodities, and products thereof in non-European foreign countries."

Nowhere is there mention of prices, nor of a limitation on profits. Indeed, in only one place does the resolution even touch a secondary, symptomatic index of inflation. This one place is in the provision for "regulation of speculative trading on commodity exchanges"—included simply for the partisan implications it may have for 1948.

Rave, rant and roar as they will about "the menace of Communism," Congressmen cannot conceal these economic considerations from the American people, to whom they are the daily facts of life. In the regular session they will have to reckon with this rising public consciousness. A. L. J.

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Eight Bottles of Beer

A short story by Phillip Bonosky

"THAT reminds me," our Aunt Susy said, putting her hands under her big cozy breasts to lower them safely as she doubled over to laugh.

"Of what, Susy?" we all cried.

"Well," she said wiping away a little laughing tear out of the corner of her eye. "I don't think I should tell you'ns even now. Even Ray don't know."

"What, Aunt Susy, what, what, what?"

"No," she said. "You forget it, kids. It just come over me this minute and it's gone away now. Don't even remember what it was," she said looking at us with surprised, innocent eyes. She poured herself a big glass of deep amber beer, and we watched her respectfully as she drank and waited for the white mustache that would be there when she was done.

"So what did you learn in school, kids?" she said amiably.

"Oh, Aunt Susy, we don't care about *that!*" we cried.

"Eddie," she said, "will you go and get Auntie a handkerchief out of your Mommie's dresser? Down in the lower left-hand drawer, honey, and be sure it's none with your Mommie's monogram on it. I want to blow in it," she explained.

Eddie ran into the next room and we could hear the drawers being furiously torn open and we could hear his loud breath panting for he was afraid he would miss something if he stayed too long. And when he came back into the room again, he smelled of lilac perfume and Susy trapped him behind her big arm and smelled him loudly and kissed him, while he squirmed.

"Now, Susy!" he cried. "You *got* to tell us!"

She blew into her handkerchief while we all watched admiringly. Then she folded it and plunged it deep inside her bosom, and warned us: "You just tell your Mommie Auntie'll bring it back again when she gets it washed."

"We won't even tell her," we vowed.

"Well," she said suddenly, "we never used to think much of Ray at first, anyhow, your Mommie didn't. I always did, though," she laughed at us, "except once!" She smiled reminiscently, and then her eyes fell on us and her big olive face moistened. "Don't you worry, kids," she said. "If anything ever happens to your Mommie—" and she looked up at God—"I'll always be a mother to you, and I'll always take care of you!"

We nodded passionately, our eyes welling with tears as we thought of ourselves then.

"Anyhow, Ray met your Mommie all by accident as she was coming down Liberty Street—"

"Was this before we were born?" we asked.

"Of course, honey, it was before all of you were born! Don't you know that?" she asked with genuine surprise. At the same time she looked at us suspiciously. "He was going with somebody else, then, and what her name is I'm not going to tell you, because your Mommie still can't bear the sight of her even yet, and if I tell you you'll go and tell your Mommie."

"No, we won't, Aunt Susy," we cried.

"Like the last time," she said.

We pinched Eddie. "You!" we cried fiercely at him and his head dwindled into his shoulders.

"Well, this girl who is nameless to you kids," she said serenely, "was going steady with Ray then, and never even knew your Mommie. It's a funny thing," she said thoughtfully, "how everything happens in life, the most amazing coincidences. If it wasn't for your Mommie coming down the street that day, and your Poppa being there, and his girl friend making the remark she did make, why none of you would be right here now, none of you!"

She measured us all, and we shivered, thrilled that we had somehow escaped that fate, and by what an eyelash!

"What did she say?"

"Your Poppa's girl friend? Oh, her! She said: 'Look at the run in that girl's stocking'."

"Just that?"

"This was in the depression," Susy said gloomily. "Your Mommie heard that remark. And her stockings were rayon—there wasn't any run, there was a great big hole. And *she* had on real silk stockings—wherever she got them from I don't think I want to know—"

She stopped a moment to drink her beer and silently we waited.

"You see, kids," she said sadly, "your Mommie hadn't been working for a long time and that remark was just too much for her! She just went and leaned up against the wall and started to bawl."

EVELYN started crying now, too, and Eddie, who had been smarting from the pinch and now could weep more honorably, and so everybody wept for awhile, and Susy sat with a faraway look in her eyes. Then she sank half her arm inside her breasts and pulled forth the handkerchief and blew her nose. Then she passed the handkerchief around.

"That's all right, kids," she said. "It was really a good thing she did that, and you don't have to cry about it now because it all turned out happy in the end, you know."

She waited until the soggy handkerchief came back to her, all balled up; she weighed it in her hand for a moment, then tucked it back inside her dress again. The bottle she lifted now was empty and with a sigh she put it back on the table beside the three others.

"I'll get you some more, Aunt Susy!" Eddie cried, jumping up.

"Oh, no, Eddie," Susy said, lifting her arm. "Four bottles is enough. 'Four bottles and four bottles is all!' your Mommie said. 'For watching kids four bottles is all!'" "Anyhow," she added, "there ain't anymore in the ice-box."

"Down in the cellar!"

"Oh, Eddie!" we cried, shocked.

Aunt Susy put on a neutral expression and withdrew from us to some distant peninsula of her own.

Eddie was standing and looking at us, frightened. We looked at Susy, who was very virtuous where she was, ob-

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viously not influencing us. Suddenly we all made a dash for the cellar, and in a moment we were back again, with four bottles, Eddie carrying two.

"Why, kids!" Susy said, surprised.

"That's all right, Aunt Susy!" we assured her.

"Well," she said. "I guess it'll be all right. I'll send over some hops and Ray can make some more."

"And yeast," we reminded her.

"And yeast," she agreed.

She opened the bottle with a bemused expression on her face, poured slowly, and smiling very tentatively to herself as if she wasn't quite committed to all this she drank it all down. Then she put the glass down.

"Well, kids," she said.

"It was mean for her to say that!" we said, picking up the thread of the story.

"Yes," she agreed. "But don't blame your Daddy, kids. Anyhow, he married your Mommie afterwards, so that shows. And he was real sorry, and when he saw your Mommie crying like that, he went up to her and said to her: 'Honest, she didn't mean that remark!' And your Mommie pushed him away and he kept following her, telling her all the way home. She slammed the door in his face. And next day he sent her a letter which was, 'To the Girl in the Bozik Family.' You see, kids," she said to us seriously, "your Mommie was real low that day, she'd been walking all day trying to find a job, and you don't know, kids, how it used to be in the depression!"

She folded her arms and looked at the second bottle of beer.

"Is that all?" we asked, disappointed.

She didn't answer for awhile. Finally, as though in a dream, her arm reached for the bottle, she took it by the neck and lifted the cap with a quick jerk of the bottle opener. There was a swoosh of foam, which ran down the side of the bottle, then the gurgle of the beer as she poured it out.

"You don't want me to tell you about afterwards, anyhow," she said. "Nobody knows about that but me and your Mommie, and your Mommie's father, but he didn't tell anyone before he died. Anyhow, he couldn't speak English good."

We held our breath.

"He was seeing Mommie a lot then, and everything was all right, because he had a job, and he wanted to marry Mommie. And then just when it looked like everything would be all right, he lost his job!"

"And it was the depression!" we all moaned.

She nodded her head. But suddenly she began to laugh again and doubled over dangerously. "Every time I think of it," she choked, "I can't help from laughing! If I don't tell it, I'll bust!"

"Tell it, Aunt Susy!"

"Well, the fact is, kids, it was me that got your Mommie and Ray to get married. It happened this way. But before I tell you, I want you all to put your hands on your hearts. Everybody do it." Joyously we did. "Now say: 'Strike me down if I ever breathe this to a living soul, and never, never to my Daddy!' "

Illustration by Al Blaustein.

WE REPEATED it. She examined each of us in the eye to see whether the swearing took, then she said: "Well, then, when he lost his job, Mommie said she wouldn't marry him."

"Oh!" We all caught our breaths.

"But she did afterwards!" Evelyn said tearfully, her lower lip beginning to quiver.

Susy put her arm around her. "Of course she did, honey, but this is just

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the story. It all comes out all right in the end. Don't you worry, now. You know Aunt Susy would never tell you a story that didn't have a happy ending, and especially a real life one like this, about people we know about." She drank. "Well, she wouldn't marry him, because your Daddy was out of work, too, and she got a little job for eighteen dollars a week, and who could live on that? If your Daddy was only making eighteen dollars a week," she said ominously to us, "you'd all die off one by one. But in the depression, they didn't die, and I was only making nine dollars a week keeping house for Mrs. Rogers up on the hill. Someday," she said, "I'll tell you a story about *her!*"

"Tomorrow, Aunt Susy?"

"Well," she said, "he would come and see your Mommie and drink schnapps with your grandfather in the kitchen, and he would start arguing and fussing with your grandpa. And then they would fight."

"Who, Susy?"

"Your grandpa and your Daddy. Your Daddy said your grandpa was keeping your Mommie from marrying him. Oh, them were awful fights! Your grandpa, who was an old ignorant foreigner, would call your Daddy a lot of things, all in a foreign language, kids — and your Daddy wouldn't like them, and so they'd fight.

"Well, this night they were arguing there, and your Mommie ran upstairs to bed; she couldn't stand them anymore. And I was there sitting in the kitchen trying to read—I used to read a lot in those days, you know, kids—and they kept drinking. Finally, it started, and your Grandpa and Ray stood up, and Ray said something. And they started, and that's when I did it."

"Did what, Aunt Susy?"

"Well, kids, I didn't know what to do! I was so scared. They were in the middle of the floor holding on to each other, so I picked something off the table and closed my eyes and hit one of them over the head. It was a bottle and it broke."

"Oh, Aunt Susy!" we all cried, horrified.

"Don't worry, kids," she said desperately, "it'll all come out right in the end." She mopped her face with her balled-up handkerchief and shut her eyes as she drank the beer.

"Well," she said, wiping her mouth, "when I opened my eyes, there he was laying on the floor, his head bleeding." She paused ominously. "It was your Daddy." She mopped her brow again. "I looked at him and then I went upstairs and I opened the door, and your Mommie was laying on the bed. And I said to her in a real quiet voice: 'Nellie, go call the police. I just killed Ray!'"

There was a dead silence. None of us moved; we were frozen. We watched her go through familiar, but now highly significant motions—pushing her hair back from her damp brow, hoisting her breasts, drinking a long, breathless glass of beer.

Finally she resumed. "Well, kids," she said. "Your Mommie ran downstairs and when she saw him laying there, she screamed and dropped to her knees and started crying to him: 'Ray!' she said. 'If you don't die, I'll marry you. As God's my witness,' she said. 'I'll marry you. I take back everything I ever said about you!'

"Your grandfather had gone to sleep in a chair, and I was standing there thinking I was awful young to have to die in the electric chair."

"What happened, Susy? What happened then?"

SHE was lost again in her reverie and didn't hear us for a long time. Finally, with a start, she said: "Oh, this went on for a long, long time,

TWO POEMS by Naomi Replansky

DULCE ET DECORUM

In syrup, in syrup,
in syrup we drown.

Teachers and preachers,
the haloes, the haloes!

Padded with pathos
our winding sheet.

The bomb bounded
by buxom beauties.

Horror gelded
by the happy ending.

Arm-kick useless,
leg-kick helpless.

How swim, how survive,
in syrup, in syrup.

THE INDEPENDENT COUGH

A cough ran down the fire-escape
Of a third-rate hotel.
I stopped him and asked: "Guttural mister,
What do you run from? Murder, fire, or rape?"

"I'm on the street," he answered, climbing down,
"From this day forth.
My children's children have crowded out the lungs
That were my factory and my home-town.

"I'm on my own, and off to end my days
As I damn please,
In poolrooms, showing off my special tricks,
In movies, hacking in a sexy haze."

Often now in a most beautiful night
Heavy with stars
I meet my friend, the independent cough,
Laughing, drinking, whoring, in lamplight.

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and finally your grandfather began to stir and woke up. Your grandfather said: 'What happened?' And I said: 'I hit Ray over the head and killed him.' He got up and knelt down beside Ray, turned him over. Then he said: 'He's not dead. He's just out cold.' Well, kids, imagine me!"

"Oh, how lucky, Susy!"

"Oh, what a relief that was to me, kids! The way I like Ray, too! We picked him up and put him on the bed upstairs and your Mommie came up to me and said to me: 'I'm thanking you, Susy. I'm really thanking you! If you hadn't done that to Ray, I'd never know how much I'd miss him, and when he comes to again, I'm going to tell him I'll marry him.'

"Well, we waited for hours, all night. At first I was afraid he wouldn't wake up, then after a while I got afraid that he *would*. For I got to thinking: suppose he remembers who hit him on the head when he wakes up? Your Daddy had an awful hot temper in those days. What will he do to me, I thought. Kids, I was in a cold sweat, and I was chewing my fingers all the time."

"But he woke up, Aunt Susy?"

She smiled. "Of course he woke up finally."

"What did he do, Aunt Susy?"

"Who?" she asked with surprise.

"Him, him," we cried with anguish.

"Oh," she said. "Nothing. All he said was: 'What am I doing here?' And your Mommie said: 'You passed out and bumped your head when you fell.' Then she said: 'Ray, I'll marry you, but you got to make me one promise.' 'What's that?' your Daddy asked. 'Never, never drink again!'

" 'Only beer?' he said.

" 'Only beer,' your Mommie answered.

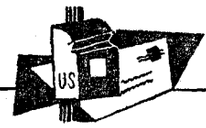
"And he kept his promise ever after that. I broke him out of the drinking habit. So they got married, you see, and your Mommie never forgot what I did for her, and you can see, kids, she always got a bottle in the ice-box for me when I come over to watch you kids, when Ray and her goes to the movies. She don't begrudge me anything at all!" She wiped a tear from her eyes.

"But Aunt Susy, why are you crying? You said in the beginning it always made you laugh."

"Well, kids, it does make me laugh most of the time, and then sometimes

(*Continued on page* 23)

mail call



American in France

TO NEW MASSES: The following letter, which I received from a friend in northern France, should be of interest to your readers for its account of the recent strikes and the conditions which gave rise to the workers' struggles.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

A WEEK ago I attended a Congress of the FTP—the Franc-Tireur Partisans—who were, as you know, the first resistants here. There were representatives from all the different cities and villages, and with one exception, an amiable plump little storekeeper who did some brave work for the Resistance, they were all working class—miners, masons, *cheminots*, factory workers. I think at least fifty came up to say to me, "Have you heard what the American seamen did at Marseilles? They went on strike in sympathy with our strikes." They said, "We are so happy that there are Americans who are with us," and "Of course we know all Americans were not in accord with the policies of the great industrialists."

It was exactly the same here at Avion, where a large percent of the population has never even seen an American. "The English were the ones who came to liberate us and they didn't stay long because we had already liberated ourselves." Everybody was thrilled at the gesture of international solidarity from those American seamen. I don't know whether they realize their gesture had such resounding effects, even in this most remote corner of the country.

In spite of steady radio reports that everyone is going back to work, the strike is in full force here and for everyone. Avion is known as the most militant town of the region, and for that reason it is probably the most calm. No one here had even tried to go to work, and the *Garde Mobile* wouldn't dare show up. At Lievin, not far from here, 300 men (Socialists) started to go to work but they were met by women pickets who promptly unclothed them and threw everything they had on into the bushes. The men fled *sans culotte*, crying, "We will not come back again, ever!"

Ever since I came in June, I have witnessed one injustice after another—rise of prices (meat from 250 to 500 fr. a kilo; eggs from 10 to 25 fr. each; bread tripled); the *boulanger* open only three days a week and the *boucherie* the same; butter cut off the rations (though you still buy *marche noir* up to 1200 fr. a kilo); wine taken off rations and then vanishing altogether except high-priced brands. And each time I as an American rebelled, and wondered why people continued to stand for such outrages. My landlady said, "Wait and see. The French are very patient. But when they are pushed too far, they will revolt—altogether." Which is exactly what has happened.

The most terrible thing is that practically no worker nowadays has any savings. A strike of even a few weeks' duration means *la misere noire*, for all. I have no way of knowing what the unions in America are doing for their fellow unions here in France, but I do know that help is needed now as it never was needed before perhaps in the history of unionism. The miners here received their last two weeks' pay (the *quinzaine*, they call it) last Tuesday. There is no more coming. In 1941, they went on strike against the Germans. They say, "We weren't afraid then of machineguns or tanks; anybody is crazy who thinks we will back down before a few *gendarmes*." But the problem of seeing that your family doesn't go hungry, in this country where even a handful of carrots costs 50 francs, is really overwhelming.

Avion, Pas de Calais. J. L.

Anniversary

TO NEW MASSES: March of next year will be twelve months of the infamous Truman Doctrine. Twelve months marked by a continuous deterioration of international relations and aggravation of internal divisions in most of the countries in which the doctrine has been applied more directly and openly as in Greece, Italy, France.

May I, therefore, ask that you arrange for the preparation of a special issue to be on sale during the week marking the anniversary of the doctrine? The material should include: (1) References to the domestic abridgement of civil rights which the doctrine has made necessary for its enforcement abroad. (2) The daily incitements of hatred against the Soviet Union, a result of the spirit of political intolerance embodied in the doctrine. (3) The accelerated agitation for universal military training to enforce a doctrine that has nothing of peaceful intentions or friendly purposes in its conception. (4) The Marshall Plan as the financial side of the doctrine. In it are implicit threats of coercion against those who might not wholly submit to its sweeping conditions.

Clearly the doctrine should be branded as one of the most disgraceful contributions to the world by American statesmanship at a time of the greatest need for solidarity.

New York. A. GARCIA DIAZ.

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The Strike in France:

WHY THE PRESS WAS WRONG

By DEREK KARTUN

Paris.

WHEN the Strike Committee called the French workers back to work the press of France and of many other countries indulged in a whooping party. For some it was the final proof that the Communists no longer commanded support in the French unions. For others it was proof that in the struggle between East and West the East had in some way suffered its first major defeat. Still others believed the French unions had been dealt a mortal blow, that the Communists had passed the zenith of their power, that a revival of the French Socialist Party could now be expected.

These pleasant thoughts did not last long before the small voice of doubt was heard. *Le Figaro*, a traditional French conservative paper which has never been accused of rashness or lack of moderation, expressed the view that really the Communist Party has emerged stronger than ever from the strike. And indeed this statement appeared to be borne out by the facts. For in a municipal by-election at Le Havre in the last week of the strike, the Communists increased their votes. And within a day of the strike's end they had recruited another fifty-two workers of the Renault automobile plant and had also enlisted thirty-eight schoolteachers in the Paris region alone. So much for the end of Communist influence in France!

There are very substantial reasons why the enthusiasm of the press had been so much whistling in the dark. For this remarkable strike did correspond to the most urgent needs of the French working people. While the workers of Paris were feeding potato soup to their children, butter was available to all at $5 a pound. The price of bread had doubled in five months, retail prices in general were up by 27% in ninety days; coal and power had risen 45% by government decree. Meanwhile wages had lagged. Although the working people of France have doubled industrial output in the two years since 1945, their purchasing power has dropped by 31%. These were the realities of the strike and these things account for the remarkable tenacity of the workers in the key industries.

Provocation, splitting tactics, machineguns, teargas and batons, colonial troops, every kind of falsehood and intimidation—none of these things and not hunger itself were able to shake the dockers, seamen, miners and metal workers. When they went back to work on the orders of their unions, with considerable gains to their credit, they understood perfectly well that while the Socialist Party had done everything in its power to break the movement, the Communist leaders of the CGT had remained firm to the end and had fought both inside and outside Parliament in their interests. They knew that the French unions had never before possessed a leadership like this. They also understood, as the CGT warned them, that further bitter struggles were ahead, and for this reason they had to know when to carry out a temporary withdrawal in order to preserve their forces. They carried out this withdrawal, confident that their leaders were right.

These are the reasons why the press was wrong.

IN SPITE of all the propaganda to the effect that the strike was a political racket which bore no relation to the real needs of the workers, the strikers themselves knew perfectly well that it was no such thing. At the same time, all thoughtful observers will understand that the strike has considerable political import both for France and for Europe. This movement was the first mighty protest of the workers of Western Europe against right-wing government policies which have led to disastrous inflation and widespread misery. As such it was inevitably at the same time a protest against a foreign policy which has tied France to the United States.

Dependence on America has meant that the Communists —who now represent almost the whole of the French working class—were excluded from the government, since dollars would not be sent to a country with Communists in its administration. It meant that the country has been flooded with American automobiles and films, to the great detriment of the home industries. It meant that urgent nationalization and control programs were abandoned because Congress had made it clear that it favored "free enterprise" in those countries to which it would vote dollars. It meant, too, that in return for doubtful favors under the Marshall Plan, France abandoned her reparation and coal claims on Germany, without which her industries could hardly recover.

Thus in protesting against the failures of the French government the French workers were protesting, essentially, against the Marshall Plan and all that dependence on America necessarily implies. To this extent the strike has profound significance beyond the frontiers of France. For it demonstrates for the first time, and in a quite unmistakable fashion, that the domination by Wall Street of Western Europe is not going to be either as easy or as rapid as Mr. Marshall had perhaps imagined. Proof of Washington anxiety in this connection is afforded by John Foster Dulles' trip to Paris in the middle of the strike.

Mr. Dulles had only one serious purpose: to talk with General de Gaulle. From the general he appears to have obtained all the assurances he required regarding de Gaullist policy toward Germany. In return it is believed that he assured the general of State Department support in his plans to assume power. The danger in France is precisely that the ruling class there—and the State Department in Washington—are both now looking toward the general. This danger is a danger of fascism and that is why the very impressive demonstration of democratic strength in the recent strikes is so important.

I REJOICE at every effort working men make to organize; I do not care on what basis they do it. Men sometimes say to me, "Are you an Internationalist?" I say, "I do not know what an Internationalist is"; but they tell me it is a system by which the working men from London to Gibraltar, from Moscow to Paris, can clasp hands. Then I say God speed, God speed, to that or any similar movement.—*Wendell Phillips.*

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review and comment

THREE KINDS OF FICTION

How can we restore the fully rounded human being to modern novels of action and ideas?

By CHARLES HUMBOLDT

ONE of the chief problems that the young progressive writer faces today arises when he tries to take over fully-developed literary forms which are the mature expression of world views hostile to his own. Such, for example, are the bourgeois novel of action and the bourgeois novel of ideas. In the first, people act but are devoid of thought; in the latter, they are packed with concepts but do not act. Yet the adventure and the detective story on the one hand and the intellectual novel on the other are challenging and tempting forms. If we consider what is wrong with them, we may also find a way to use them better.

In the ordinary commercial novel the hero is engulfed in his adventures and exists only because of what happens to him. The violence of his behavior rarely succeeds in hiding the hand that moves him, which is not the hand of circumstance but of the writer. Bold and brainless, he passes through fire and water and emerges with the same thick hide and as little wisdom as he had when conceived. He is a string of anecdotes in search of a character. There is an increasing tendency to pepper the violence with sadism, as in James Cain's novels, but this is less a criticism of certain phenomena of American life today than it is a surrender to them. In fact, the commercial novel serves the masters of the existing order more through its destruction of the reader's critical sense than it does by its crude apologetics. In making a farcical hash of cause and effect, it discourages the reader from thinking about the world in which he lives.

The serious novel is not, however, exempt from the danger of presenting actions that distort the cause to which they are related. For example, Hemingway's inability to interpret the meaning of the Spanish Civil War made him create a hero whose acts and death have a purely subjective import. It is exactly the "timelessness" of Robert Jordan's sacrifice, which Hemingway values so highly, that strikes us as futile and sentimental, because it is not related to external necessity but to abstract heroism. This subjectivity reinforces Hemingway's picture of the Loyalist cause as an admirable but hopeless gesture in the tragedy of man. Here we see how a shallow, unhistorical conception of social events may negate the best intentions of the writer and turn his heroes into adventurers.

A DIFFERENT and more subtle perversion of the purposes of the novel is found in Gide's *The Counterfeiters*. The writer, Edouard, explaining his theory of the novel, cries, "Must we abandon the novel of ideas because of the groping and stumbling of the incapable people who have tried their hands at it? Up to now we have been given nothing but novels with a purpose parading as novels of ideas. But that's not it at all, as you may imagine. Ideas. . . . ideas, I must confess, interest me more than men—interest me more than anything. They live; they fight; they perish like men. Of course it may be said that our only knowledge of them is through men, just as our only knowledge of the wind is through the reeds that it bends; but all the same the wind is of more importance than the reeds." And when his friend, the realist Bernard, points out that the wind exists independently of the reeds, Edouard says, "Yes, I know; ideas exist only because of men; but that's what's so pathetic; they live at their expense." He yearns to forsake the real world where ideas must be tried in the crucible of necessity. He reflects Gide's own misanthropic idealism and predilection for unmotivated crime. (Lafcadio in *The Vatican Swindle*, Strouvilhou and Gheridanisol in *The Counterfeiters*.)

At first one might think Edouard's theory to be based on a severe respect for ideas; actually it drains them of significance. The ironic tone with which the scene of Edouard's exposition is handled gives Gide away. He is not ready to accept responsibility for the theory of his characters (though his own work is permeated by its influence). A similar evasion persists in the philosophical novels of Thomas Mann, in whom a hesitation to commit oneself, a shyness to find the truth for fear of having to join in struggle, passes for Olympian calm. In this pseudo-novel of ideas the writer regales himself and us with every available opinion, political outlook, religion, art theory, philosophy. The naive reader may believe him superior to these, capable of regarding them as facets of his mental life, foods to be tasted, compared or discarded. Suspending judgment, he gives himself an impersonal, dispassionate place in the world of thought. But in so doing he loses the ability to imagine a structure of action founded on any single world outlook. Tragic understanding, drama, becomes impossible. Instead of the passionate debates of Ivan with Alyosha in *The Brothers Karamazov*, or the painful arguments of Rybin and Pavel in Gorky's *Mother*, we have the interminable discussions of *The Magic Mountain*, in the course of which all the participants—even those who commit suicide—become comic characters. And so the ideas which, alas, "live at their expense," shrivel with them.

Thus we see that the separation of idea and action is as harmful to the novel as it is to society. But the mere rejection of the forms which embody that separation—the abandonment of the bourgeois novel of action or novel of ideas—is too simple a solution. Underneath the forms are one-sided conceptions of man, reflecting either his brutalization or his paralysis by the forces of capitalism, ignoring poten-

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tialities which may express themselves in struggle or perhaps only in agony. Therefore, restoring the fully-rounded human being, rich in self-awareness and capable of both thought and action, the writer will have found a way to reunite the two major trends of fiction.

The true dramatic character is neither a primitive nor a "cultured" person, a dilettante. His actions are not in inverse proportion to his intelligence, nor does he engage in dialogue just to display himself or his creator. He is a man who has hit upon what for him is the unyielding light and truth and who struggles to express what he believes with every inch of his body and mind. Drama, fiction is not essays, discussions, a descent of the author, like God, upon the human race. It is the depiction of men *possessed by ideas*, whose every act is a further concentration of their being. That these ideas are born out of the material circumstances and social relations of a given time is no shameful defect in them, but the simple condition of their existence. Otherwise they would have no power to move us as they do.

Aldous Huxley

THE WORLD OF ALDOUS HUXLEY: An Omnibus of His Fiction and Non-Fiction Over Three Decades, *edited and with an introduction by Charles J. Rolo. Harper.* $3.50.

MR. ROLO has made an adequate selection from the writings of Aldous Huxley. Perhaps he has erred in reprinting all of *Antic Hay* (1923) and *After the Fireworks* (1930), skimping *Point Counter Point* (1928) and omitting *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936). A broader selection would have been easy, for nearly all of Huxley's books are arrangements of fragments rather than novels — without much development or plot. Mr. Rolo has wisely omitted, however, most of Huxley's mystical speculations.

Is Huxley still worth reading? Edwin Berry Burgum (*The Novel and the World's Dilemma*) thinks that *Antic Hay* and *Point Counter Point* "will remain invaluable social documents of the period," reflecting "the disordered surface of life" in the Horrible Twenties. This is true, though "valuable" rather than "invaluable" might be the better adjective to describe a record of the insignificant and futile lives of the spoiled children of society. Rolo claims that Huxley is "a great comic artist" who has "important things to say." These two claims are doubtful. Huxley is too savage in attacking his bourgeois neurotics and, at the same time, too closely identified with them, to be comic in the large sane Shavian manner. As for the important things he says, they are little more than abstract presentations of skepticism, mechanical materialism or mysticism. Such philosophy has been the basis of fine literature but does not itself, in essay form, promote the novelist's art. And the mouthpieces for Huxley's ideas, as Rolo points out, are not real people: only some minor characters have life.

Huxley's best book, *Point Counter Point*, in formlessness, surface brilliance, pretentiousness, lack of development of characters and their relationships, is like Dos Passos' *Manhattan Transfer*, but is a narrower work, dealing less with common people and the social system which presses upon them.

Huxley, with Dos Passos, belongs to that Lost Generation for whom World War I completed a trend toward impotent despair. The triumph of monopoly at the end of the nineteenth century in England and America had already established hopelessness. The hidden thought of most serious writers had been: "If capitalism has failed us, all is lost." Mark Twain's poem to industrialism, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, which summarized centuries of assault upon feudalism, was an old warrior's tale of youthful victories. In this light, the Lost Generation of the Twenties appears as the sick children of none-too-healthy parents. Hemingway is thus a Twain whittled down, lacking even the memories. Huxley imitates, with a lesser intellectual power, Henry Adams' hatred of science and industry and Henry James' critique of upper-class conversation.

Huxley shares with certain other writers an inability to grapple with the full shameful reality of our times—an inability which approaches infantilism. Hemingway, too, found peace only in his Middle-Western boyhood, and his heroes, happiest when playing games, think themselves adult, undergraduate-wise, when enjoying bright talk in barrooms. Huxley allows his heroes to graduate from universities, but he longs, as Burgum shows, for the values of childhood days based on the Victorian solidity of his Huxley and Arnold ancestry, and identifies himself with the dwarf of *Crome Yellow* who is able to recreate a feudal stability for himself.

Though Huxley takes many sharp photographs of a special world from interesting angles, and has been a serious artist, he makes duller reading each year. Sharing the pessimism of a Joyce or a Hemingway, he lacks the penetration beneath appearance that makes Joyce significant, and the literary architecture that preserves Hemingway.

CHARLES WASON.

Fluoroscope

PATTERN FOR AMERICAN FASCISM, *by John L. Spivak. New Century.* 25¢.

JOHN L. SPIVAK, whose writings were among the first to expose the activities of the native fascists at a time when they were naively regarded by some as a harmless "lunatic fringe," now issues another warning that Americans would do well to heed if they treasure their homes and their liberties.

Pattern for American Fascism, as the title indicates, is a fluoroscope of present-day reaction at home and abroad. The author presents some striking similarities between what Hitler did in Germany to achieve complete domination and what has happened in the US since the end of the war; he reveals the forces behind the drive to regiment Americans and to enslave Europeans, shows the industrialists of the US at work through the Chamber of Commerce and the NAM, portrays the Un-American Committee not as a collection of clowns (although its members do indeed have clownish characteristics) but as the agency of big business organized to throttle American thought and destroy labor's gains.

Spivak concludes that "if the German people had acted in time, while Hitler was solidifying his forces, they would have been saved the agony through which they passed and are passing now. . . . The first move in the steps Hitler took to establish fascism in Germany — weakening and control of the trade unions, which the industrialists themselves could not control directly—has already been taken in this country. . . . Failure to awaken in time will enable a few industrialists to enslave the American people, as Hitler enslaved the German people

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"Society: Mothers and Daughters," lithograph by Adolph Dehn.

and then led them on the road to war, death and destruction."

This grim warning is implicit throughout Spivak's carefully-documented and vividly-written expose.

The pattern for American fascism is clearly outlined in thousands of newspaper articles, scare headlines, radio broadcasts—and sermons from pulpits. If those Americans who are determined that it can't happen here want help in recruiting the timid, the blind and the lethargic for struggle against reaction, they will find real assistance in Spivak's hard-hitting pamphlet.

SUSAN GIBBS.

Poet of the Poor

POEMS, *by Tristan Corbiere. Translated by Walter McElroy. Banyan Press.* $3.

CORBIERE, unknown and unheralded, died at the age of thirty, victim of poverty and disease. Rimbaud, who did most of his writing during only about three years (between 1870 and 1873, two years before Corbiere's death), had to escape from the squalor of Paris to become a merchant and trader in North Africa. Corbiere did not escape. He sang the song of the poor, the "proprietors of sores," the horribly diseased and deformed, his brothers in Brittany. While "God's wrath" was "purged" on them "here on earth," Corbiere observed how the well-fed pastors heard their pitiful confessionals. This French poet, with pity and understanding born of misery, could see through the foul contradictions of an insufferable world, and by means of what Walter McElroy (the excellent translator of this much-needed volume) calls his "truly dialectical genius for resolving contradictions" was able to write a "poetry of affirmation."

Perhaps nowhere is the device of irony used so effectively. Not only does one see the picture of an impoverished Brittany through Corbiere's sympathetic and powerful lines (Eliot practically adopted his method of startling imagery and sharp understatement), but one also sees the corruption in it. This mocker saw the essential dignity of a human being even as he looked at

This one, rachitic, with a bellow
Gives his boneless stump a twitch,
Elbowing the epileptic fellow
Who labors below in a ditch.

Corbiere's irony was his oracle and his lasher—part of his social and poetic technique. He could say,

So passerby, observe: all will pass . . .
Only the idiot's eye will stay.
For he is in a state of grace . . .
—And Grace is Eternity!—

These quotations are from what is perhaps Corbiere's best poem, "La Rapsode Foraine" (The Wandering Singer), but Mr. McElroy (who is familiar to NEW MASSES readers) has included such other fine poems as "Cris D'aveugle" (Cries of the Blindman) and "Le Poete Contumace" (Poet by Default). The French has been placed side by side with the English translations which, by the way, show a remarkable closeness to the difficult paradoxes, ironies, and wit of a poet who should be enjoyed by a wider audience.

HARRIET HAMBARIN.

In Brief

CLOUD BY DAY, *by Muriel Earley Sheppard. University of North Carolina Press.* $4.25. The locale of Mrs. Sheppard's account of the coke region is the strip of undulating valley in southern Pennsylvania, lying between the Allegheny Mountains and the Monongahela River and extending a little beyond, whose mines provide the coal that is converted into coke for the mills of Pittsburgh and the Ohio Valley. Mrs. Sheppard knows the region well and writes warmly of its people, history and leaders. Her chapters dealing with the strike of 1894, the activities of the coal and iron police and the conditions which led to union organization are excellent reporting. There are good sections on the old barons: J. V. Thompson, Frick, the Mellons and Carnegie. The reader of this study will come from it with a clear picture of the turbulent and hazardous existence of the miner and his family.

140 MILLION PATIENTS, *by Carl Malmberg. Reynal & Hitchcock.* $2.75. A most intelligent and revealing survey of the state of health of the American people. It deals with the quality and economics of American medicine and discusses many of the ques-

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tions which have been in the news from time to time: medical advertising, the cost of sickness, health insurance plans, the ignorance of physicians, dangerous remedies and so on. Mr. Malmberg, chief investigator for the United States Subcommittee on Health and Education, advocates the incorporation of health insurance into the social security system, and he is severely critical of both the medical societies, who oppose outright any such measures, and Senator Taft, whose bill is an attempt to deflect the demand for adequate government care.

ART AND THE SOCIAL ORDER, *by D. W. Gotshalk. University of Chicago Press.* $3.75. Professor Gotshalk takes up cudgels against prevalent systems of esthetics, such as the formalist "art for art's sake" and the pragmatic emphasis on personal reaction and enjoyment. He shows that what he calls the "terminal values" of art—its character as a thing in itself, and its character as representation, as communication—are interrelated. His ideas are deeply thought out and clearly presented. The one weakness is the language, which, in the interests of clarity, attains what might almost be called a formalism of its own, a mathematical abstraction losing the representational character that might make it more helpful to artist and audience. But this is an important and even revolutionary book in academic esthetics.

THE KEY TO THE GREAT GATE, *by Hinko Gottlieb. Simon & Schuster.* $2.75. The author, a former Partisan in Yugoslavia and prisoner of the Germans, has created a kind of mock John Henry or Paul Bunyan of the Resistance, who can perform every miracle except to free the three Jews into whose cell he has been thrust. He can produce slabs of salami, kosher chickens and grand pianos, but when he is asked the $64 question he must answer, "My key opens only the great gate," namely the knowledge that "living itself is happiness, if we do not distort its meaning," and that if "you emperors, leaders and dictators, you reformers" will leave man alone, he will find his own way. Gottlieb is now in Palestine where his dream of utopian anarchism is again mocked by British bayonets and the scramble for oil. He wants only to be left alone. The dreamer cannot find his own key.

THE DIGNITY OF MAN, *by Herschel Baker. Harvard University Press.* $5. A study of the great thinkers of classic Greece, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Reformation. The writing is lively, the studies well documented, the criticism often penetrating. However, while there is some mention of historical events and even economic changes, the author does not see that man, whom he treats as a rational and moral being, can only be understood in terms of the conflicts which confront him. Thus he fails to see that in spite of the lapses from a rational and moral dignity, each reassertion of this quality had greater power because it was accompanied with greater control over nature, greater ability to organize society to meet man's needs. Professor Baker is one of those academic minds to whom any concept of man growing through his ability to solve real problems is "determinism," which leaves him searching for man's dignity while denouncing the means through which man attains it.

FILMS OF THE WEEK

"THE BISHOP'S WIFE" (Astor), selected to play the Command Performance in London during the recent Wedding Week, was received with great disdain by the English critics. American critics were somewhat more polite, the difference being due to local pride. Even so, it received less of the ax than it deserved.

The film, heralded on both sides of the Atlantic as another Goldwyn masterpiece, is nothing more than the usual childish Hollywood success story in which the characters solve their problems with a minimum of effort or anguish. The latter-day Hollywood geniuses—aware, apparently, of the thinness of the old-style life-is-beautiful stories—have come to depend more and more on the intervention of divine messengers to wind up the plot. These literal dei-ex-machinae are always, naturally, in the image of the Hollywood movie type. Thus the recurring Mr. Jordan is always a Union League Club executive type; in *Down to Earth* the heavenly emissary is a glamor-girl; in *It's a Wonderful Life* he's the fatherly type, and in *The Bishop's Wife* a kissfool played by no less than Cary Grant. Angels can, of course, perform miracles; and although — pshaw — nobody *really* believes the things they do, still nobody (it is assumed) will question the end products of their visits. Thus is skepticism washed away in a tidal wave of good will, and the happy characters entrenched more than ever in the hearts of their Radio City countrymen.

The British film-makers, as I have averred before in these columns, are clever fellows. They rarely deny historical facts, as we do in this country; they merely twist the facts so that the villain of history becomes the maligned, the hero the crackpot. But they achieve these results with great subtlety. In *Odd Man Out* an air of impartiality is assumed: the film producers claim they are not interested in the issues of Irish freedom but only in the study of human behavior under certain circumstances. Yet when the film is finished, the cause of Irish independence is torn to shreds. In *Stairway to Heaven* British imperialism emerges as a fine democratic force, and its attackers as crude, unthinking fellows.

The latest example of British cunning, *Captain Boycott* (at the Winter Garden) is built around the struggles of the Irish peasants against evictions, high rents and appropriation of their cattle. Now Irish history is full of the struggle against "landlordism," and St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, is revered for his acts against snakes and landlords. To picture the landowner or his agent as anything less than history depicts him would get the film gentry nowhere. Thus the first half of the film is full of fine action, showing dramatically the burden upon the Irish farmers and their unity against evictions. The film at this stage is also full of fine shots of the countryside and the farms.

But as the film unwinds, the technique of the producer becomes apparent. A dispossessed farmer and his beautiful daughter are introduced. The hero, leader of the militant farmers, falls for her. Then comes a change. The girl and her father suddenly tire of the fighting and move into the home of a dispossessed farmer, something no decent man in the community would do. Does the hero repudiate her? Not at all. He asks her why she did it, and the camera brings the troubled face of the girl into closeup. She wants only peace. Her brother has been killed by the landlords, they have been driven from their home. Can't people leave her alone? The indefensible act of betraying her class now becomes less important than her desire for peace.

On the other hand, a farmer who persists in treating the girl's family as treasonable, her lover with scorn and the landlords with proper enmity is shown in closeup as a fanatic. He and his followers are depicted as rowdies when they pull Boycott, the landlord's agent, from his horse during a steeple-

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chase, and as an unruly mob in later actions. Thus by the introduction of irrelevant issues treachery is condoned and honest resentment twisted out of its context and condemned.

ONE British film, however, that provides relative enjoyment is *Nicholas Nickleby* (Little Carnegie). Although not as good as *Great Expectations* it still has much of the flavor of the novel. It presents the usual gallery of ingratiating Dickens characters, major and minor, in which are represented in black and white, without the slightest shading, the heroes and villains of the author's England. In the film, virtue—worn like an expensive overcoat by a manly, handsome boy—is happily wed to innocence, while the various scoundrels meet their just ends. While containing less condemnation of social ills than other Dickens novels, the author's hatred of debtor's prison, corrupt educational practices and usury is plainly evident.

Symphony Fantastique, supposedly based on the life of Hector Berlioz, is a heart-throb-and-inspiration film. The composer, tossing on a cot that contains no linen, suddenly wakes up. The window has blown open, revealing the quiet, sleeping city. He staggers to his feet, lights a candle with a faraway look in his eyes, and reaches for his quill. Then he begins madly to compose. In the morning he is found asleep, exhausted by his superhuman labors, while a gentle breeze ruffles the pages of the immortal manuscript.

A few bare bones of the composer's domestic troubles are thrown into the pot, but with no genuine attempt to study the man. *Mr. Handel* is the only musical biography that I know of that gives any indication of the fact that composers have had other ideas beside playing the piano twenty-four hours a day and being disagreeable to music publishers. Jean Louis Barrault, as Berlioz, bears little resemblance to the skillful and sensitive actor of *Les Enfants du Paradis*. Throughout *Symphony Fantastique* he plays the harried composer with an anguish bordering on the hysterical. In view of endless pain that he suffers it is a little astonishing to hear the friend of his youth refer to their former good times together. If Berlioz ever had any enjoyable moments, the patrons of the 55th Street Playhouse will never believe it.

JOSEPH FOSTER.

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MUSIC

LEONARD BERNSTEIN's courage in reviving Marc Blitzstein's proletarian opera, *The Cradle Will Rock*, as the last presentation of his City Center Symphony season, and the audience that crowded into the hall to chuckle, sigh and wildly applaud; People's Songs' first Hootenanny in Carnegie Hall, and the audience that likewise filled that hall to listen and join in the singing, all are signs of the cultural spring that will follow the present winter. May it come soon!

The Cradle stands up as well as it did ten years ago, because it is a perfect union of form and content. The characterizations, done with the satiric eye and economical line of a comic cartoon, cover the life of an entire community from top to bottom, and are basically true. The music, dialogue, verse and the stage movement are all of one piece. The class struggle theme looms up as even more true of American life today; for "Mr. Mister" one needs only to read "NAM."

The artistic success of the work proves the point that a composer's material need not be as broad as a Beethoven symphony, or as deep as a Bach fugue, if he has something to say. Analyzing the musical language one finds little in it of the great American folk and people's music, the sweet mountain songs, the poignant blues and exuberant jazz improvisations. Its starting point is the tawdriest of Tin Pan Alley music; the crooner sentimentality, the torch song, the pseudo-swing, even the German cabaret version of American cabaret jazz. Yet Blitzstein turns them all into pure gold, through knowing exactly what he wants to do and having the modern composer's know-how. The two songs of the "Moll" are deeply affecting; the running musical commentary on the dialogue is a sparkling language anybody can follow; the crooner and "Honolulu" satires still draw blood. Only the last chorus does not quite attain the grandeur and power it aims for. Blitzstein is unique among American composers because he laughs at the specializations that have become a fetish of both the "art" composer and the "popular" servant. He does many things well, and most important of all he is both an artist and a social human being. It will be interesting to see what he does with Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes*, which sets a deeper psychological problem than any he has yet attempted. It is certainly the most interesting "work in progress" in American music.

The People's Songs Hootenanny presented first a group of varied American folk-songs, with a loose unity provided by excerpts from Carl Sandburg's *The People, Yes*. Then followed an "international" section, including one of Bach's favorite Lutheran chorales set to new, anti-fascist words, some Russian songs and dances and calypso. Artists included Pete Seeger, Woodie Guthrie, Sonny Terry, Betty Sanders, Tom Glazer, Tony Kraber, Hally Wood, Brownie McGhee, Lee Hays and Muriel Gaines. It was a most enjoyable affair, and the pointed descriptions of the rising dollar and the ugly face of the Rankin committee were fully in the fighting tradition of American folk-song.

Some weaknesses were apparent. Nothing I say would be new to the directors, who probably have a list of future projects a yard long. An organization cannot stand still, or simply repeat itself. People's Songs has a big movement by the tail, one which has greatest importance to our country's music. It needs, among other things, a further exploration of American folklore, and the involvement of poets and creative musicians into its fresh work. The reason I mention this is not to instruct the directors, who know their job fully. It is to point up the need for the fullest support of this organization, through membership and subscription, by everyone interested in the health of American music. People's Songs is doing what a democratic, culturally-interested government should be doing, and faces the obvious difficulties of the dollar. Their address is 126 West 21st St., New York 11.

SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN.

THEATER

OF THREE recent openings only one, *The Gentleman From Athens*, pretended to any touch with the times. Being a satire on Congress it was screamed at by Mrs. Rogers as "red," an honor it was all too far from deserving. Choked by its own gags it expired, unmourned, after a few performances.

The other two openings, *Angel in the Wings* and *Caribbean Carnival*, are musicals. The first, despite some

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talentless torch-singing and other lapses, is flavorous and bright chiefly because it is so full of the Hartmans. Time, which has slowed up the legs of this comedy dancing team, has quickened their minds. They are secure among our top comedians.

At any moment that one looks and listens, *Caribbean Carnival* appears fast and furious; but the commotion does not get it anywhere. Its thin Calypso singing was lost in the spaces of the big International Theater and in the drum-ridden music. There is some excellent dancing, principally by Pearl Primus and Claude Marchant; but the dancing, too, was lost in its settings, particularly the self-consciously stylized and pointless voodoo ceremonial. It would have had a clearer and more effective presentation as a dance recital.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Eight Bottles of Beer

(*Continued from page 15*)

it makes me cry a little. I never know when it's going to make me laugh or cry. I get to thinking back to those days, how poor everybody was, and sometimes I laugh about it and sometimes I cry."

And saying this, she began to cry even more, and now Evelyn started to wail. "Oh, kids," she said, while the tears tumbled down, "how awful it was! Every time I think of your poor Mommie wearing those ugly stockings with the great big hole in them I can't help crying a bucketful!"

She poured forth freshly, and we all began to sob with her, overwhelmed with misery at the thought of our Mommie in those days walking down the street in ugly stockings with a great big hole in them. Our wails filled the room and Susy clasped her arms around us and we rocked back and forth in a solid weeping mass.

"You kids won't ever have to do that!" she sobbed to us, pulling us close to her and bathing us with her tears. "If your Aunt Susy has to go down on her hands and knees again and scrub floors from dawn to night, you'll never have to go through what Mommie went through!"

At this, everyone began to wail at the top of his voice, and she squeezed us into her big safe bosom, into which we soaked our tears; and when our mother and father came home we were all asleep.

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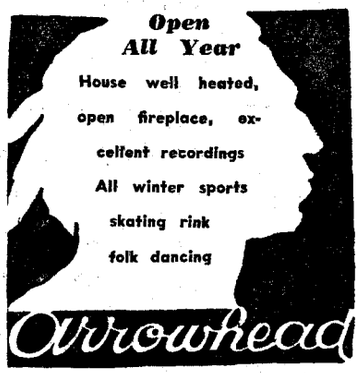

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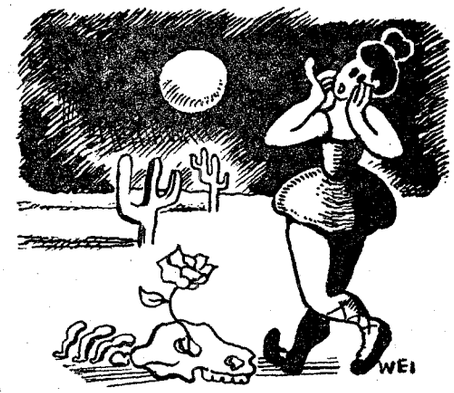

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